BILL CLINTON and CIA DRUGS for GUNS, and IRAN/CONTRA, NCOIC

ARKANSAS GOVERNOR BILL CLINTON
PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH
CIA DRUGS FOR GUNS CONNECTION

By
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An independent group of researchers in Arkansas are charging that Governor Bill Clinton is covering up an airport used by the CIA and major cocaine smugglers in a remote corner of the Ozark mountains. According to Deborah Robinson of In These Times, the Intermountain Regional Airport in Mena, Arkansas continues to be the hub of operations for people like assassinated cocaine kingpin Barry Seal as well as government intelligence operations linked to arms and drug smuggling.

In the 1980’s, the Mena airport became one of the world's largest aircraft refurbishing centers, providing services to planes from many countries. Researchers claim that the largest consumers of aircraft refurbishing services are drug smugglers and intelligence agencies involved in covert activities. In fact, residents of Mena, Arkansas, have told reporters that former marine Lt. Colonel Oliver North was a frequent visitor during the 1980’s. Eugene Hasenfus, a pilot who was shot down in a Contra supply plane over Nicaragua in 1986, was also seen in town renting cargo vehicles.

A federal Grand Jury looking into activities at the Mena airport refused to hand down any indictments after drug running charges were made public. Deborah Robinson says that Clinton had "ignored the situation" until he began his presidential campaign. Clinton then said he would provide money for a state run investigation of the Mena airport. But according to Robinson, the promise of an investigation was never followed up by Clinton’s staff. In fact, a local Arkansas state prosecutor blasted Clinton’s promise of an investigation, comparing it to "spitting on a forest fire."

Clinton’s involvement in the drug and arms running goes even further than a mere cover-up of the deplorable activities that went on, and are still going on, at the airport in Mena. A federal mail fraud case against an Arkansas pilot-trainer who participated in illegal arms exports to Central America relied on a key Clinton staffer as a chief witness. The case was dismissed for lack of evidence when the CIA refused to allow the discussion of top secret information about the arms transfers.

Terry Reed, a former employee of the CIA’s Air America operation in Laos during the Indochina war, claims to have been recruited as a pilot trainer into the Iran operation by Oliver North. In an article written by David Gallis and published last year by Covert Action Information Bulletin, Reed said that in 1983 he had agreed to supply North’s operatives with "certain items."

In pursuit of the Reagan administration’s Contra war against the Sandinistas, the CIA had planted mines in Nicaragua’s harbors. In 1984, Congress passed the Boland Amendment, which cut off US aid to the Contras. According to Reed, it was during this period that North aided him to become involved in a covert operation called "Project Donation". Reed was told he would be reimbursed for supplying the Contras by insurance companies that were linked to North’s operation.

Shortly afterwards, Reed reported the "theft" of Piper turbo-prop aircraft and he filed a $33,000 claim on which he eventually collected almost $7,000.

In late 1985, Reed received a phone call from an Air America buddy, William Cooper, a pilot working with
Southern Air Transport, another CIA front company. Cooper also was working with soon to be murdered drug kingpin Barry Seal at the same time he was flying re-supply missions for the Contras. In 1986, he was shot down and killed over Nicaragua along with co-pilot Wallace Sawyer. The plane's cargo-kicker, Eugene Hasenfus, parachuted into the arms of waiting Sandinista soldiers. Video images of his capture spanned the world and forced an airing of a tiny part of US covert operations.

Sandinistas who recovered the downed cargo plane searched Cooper's pockets and found phone numbers linking the re-supply operation with Felix Rodriguez, an associate of George Bush, best known for murdering Che Guevara after his capture in Bolivia. To this day, Rodriguez, who works for the CIA, wears Che's watch as a trophy.

Reed says that Cooper told him that the stolen Piper would soon be returned and that he should store it in a hanger at Mena until the Hasenfus mess blew over. "There was a lot of Contra stuff going on in Arkansas." said Reed, "it was the hub."

Meanwhile, Reed went into business in Mexico with the blessing of Rodriguez, who was overseeing the Contra air re-supply operation in El Salvador. Reed's company used Mexico to export arms to the Contras, in violation of the Boland Amendment. Reed went down to Mexico and his operation continued for a year after the Iran-Contra story broke.

According to Arkansas Committee researcher Mark Swaney, in the summer of 1987, even as the ContraGate hearings were going on in Congress, Terry Reed began to suspect they were using his front company for something other than smuggling weapons. One day, he was looking for a lathe in one of his warehouses near the airport in Guadalajara and he opened up one of the very large air freight shipping containers (they are about 28' long, about 7' high and about 8' wide), and he found it packed full of cocaine.

Swaney reports that Reed realized he was in a very precarious situation because he was the only person on paper who had anything to do with the company set up to run guns to the Contras in Nicaragua out of Mexico and there was nobody to say that he did not know anything about what was going on. Reed decided he wasn't going to play the part of a patsy.

Swaney says that Reed's contact man for the CIA in Mexico was Felix Rodriguez, whom Reed confronted. Reed said that he hadn't bargained for getting into narcotics smuggling and that he was dropping out all together. Soon afterward, his legal problems began.

In a series of mysterious events, Reed was charged with mail fraud for claiming insurance for an aircraft that was used by North's network under Operation Donation. Reed, who was eventually acquitted of the charges, was picked up by the FBI after the missing plane was discovered in the Mena hanger where Reed had put the plane at Cooper's suggestion. The discovery was made by Clinton's security chief Buddy Young. Young testified that his discovery of the stolen plane was coincidental, an assertion federal Judge Frank Thiel said was unsupported by the facts.

Reed was charged with mail fraud for collecting insurance on the plane, but the CIA prevented prosecutors from releasing information they called "top, top secret," about the Rodriguez-North, Southern Air Transport connection. In November 1990, the prosecution admitted they couldn't prosecute Reed without the secret documents and Judge Thiel ordered Reed acquitted on all of the charges.

Allegations of Governor Bill Clinton's extra-marital sexual exploits originated with a 1990 lawsuit by Larry Nichols, a former Arkansas state employee. Nichols was fired by Clinton in 1988 after reporters discovered Nichols had been lobbying on behalf of the Contras from his office as head of the Arkansas Development Finance Authority.
The suit claimed that Clinton had lied when he said Nichols was fired because he was phoning the Contras directly from his state office. Nichols claimed he only called Washington to lobby on behalf of the Contras. In the suit, Nichols also revealed the affair between Clinton and office secretary Gennifer Flowers.

The suit was dropped by Nichols on January 25, 1992, after Gennifer Flowers went public with her story of the affair. Nichols told reporters that he decided to drop the suit after meeting with Clinton security chief Buddy Young- the same man who found Terry Reed’s missing Piper aircraft at the Mena airport.

According to Arkansas Committee researcher Mark Swaney, Nichols said that Young had told him he was a "dead man." prompting Nichols to drop the suit. In public, Nichols says he dropped the suit because "the media have made a circus out of this thing and it's gone way too far."

In court documents recently released by Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, it has been revealed that Jackson Stephens, a billionaire banker in Little Rock, Arkansas, and one of presidential candidate Bill Clinton’s main supporters, may have played a key role in setting up the illegal purchase by the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) of two American banks.

Both First American National Bank, the largest bank in Washington DC, and Georgia National Bank, were purchased by BCCI front man and Stephens business associate Gaith Pharon. Stephens' family bank, the Worthern National Bank, recently extended a two million dollar loan to the Clinton campaign.

Stephens, who is an avid golfer and chairman of the prestigious Masters Tournament Committee, is named in the court records as having brought Pharon together with Stephens' close friend Bert Lance. Lance was a former cabinet official under President Jimmy Carter who was forced to resign due to a banking scandal.

According to newspaper reports, BCCI founder Agha Hasan Abedi was introduced to Lance by Stephens. Stephens, Lance, and First American Bank director and longtime Democratic party power broker Clark Clifford all maintain that they did not know the group of Pakinstani and Saudi investors headed by Pharon, which they were dealing with, were actually fronting for BCCI. Clinton's staff has refused to comment.

Bill Clinton's environmental record has been as dismal as his record in the Iran-Contra scandal. He has supported the incineration of extremely toxic chemicals at a site in the city of Jacksonville, 20 miles from Little Rock, that is reputed to be the most polluted spot in the United States. Jacksonville was the site of Hercules Inc., a company that produced the two components of Agent Orange, 2,4 D, which is still used in agriculture and 2,4,5,T, which was banned by the federal government in 1983 as a carcinogen. Agent Orange was used to defoliate Vietnamese forests during the Indochina war and its production yields the by- product dioxin, the most toxic chemical known on earth.

Hercules sold the operation in 1976 to Vertac Inc., which closed the plant in 1987, leaving behind 20,000 barrels of the chemicals. Gov. Bill Clinton supports a plan to incinerate the waste, a plan that is being vigorously opposed by the residents of Jacksonville.

In These Times reporter Deborah Robinson says that Clinton has allowed Arkansas to become a dumping ground. "Arkansas" she says, "is still kind of a backwoods state and there's a lot of room for someone to set up whatever they want to set up and Arkansas has been exploited by people who have things they want to do that they might no get away with somewhere else." Robinson adds, "there are a lot of questions about what Somebody like Clinton would do for a country when he couldn't do anything for his own state."